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Executive Summary

Forty diverse Public Allies Connecticut AmeriCorps Members will leverage an additional 6,000 volunteers to help increase the capacity of local nonprofit organizations in the cities of Bridgeport, New Haven, and Hartford, Connecticut. Public Allies will identify and train 40 untapped leaders, most of whom will be "Opportunity Youth," young adults disconnected from their communities, either unemployed or not in school. At the end of the 10 month period, our Members will strengthen the ability of our nonprofit partners to deliver sustainable solutions to community issues by completing projects that increase the efficacy, efficiency and scale of our partners' efforts--50% of partners will experience an increase in the ability to reach new target populations, 25% will experience an increase in organizational efficacy, and 25% will report an increase in organizational effectiveness. We will enhance organizational capacity by developing the individual competency of our AmeriCorps Members, 50% of whom will be non-degreed or unemployed prior to joining our program. 65% of our graduates that do not have degrees at program start, will complete a college-level course within one year of completing Public Allies. The support Public Allies provides to our Members will ensure our graduates are on track to pursue higher education or a sustainable career. This project will impact the CNCS focus areas of Capacity Building and Economic Opportunity. The CNCS investment of \$520,000 for this fixed-amount grant will be matched with \$872,000.

Rationale and Approach

A. NEED

As a result of its designation as the wealthiest state in the country per capita, Connecticut's social disparities are often overlooked. However, in addition to its distinction as the wealthiest state in the nation, Connecticut also has the designation as the state with the largest gap between its wealthiest and poorest citizens. The Great Recession further exasperated this gap and continues to have a profound impact in Connecticut. Lasting from March 2008 to January 2010, the Great Recession lasted four months longer in Connecticut than it did for the nation at large, and had a particularly hard effect on Connecticut's major urban areas. Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven respectively experienced unemployment rates as high as 16.4%, 14.3% and 13.8%, and although the state's unemployment rate subsided to 8.8% in November 2012 (Connecticut Department of Labor, Current Employment Statistics, <http://www1.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi/unemprateCTUS.asp>, December 20, 2012), the growing poverty rate and other indicators of Connecticut's economic well-being reflect a community struggling to regain ground. The median income of households in Connecticut have fallen

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for two years straight, primarily among the lowest waged workers ("The State of Working Connecticut 2012: Employment, Jobs, and Wages in the Wake of the Great Recession," Feder & Rodriguez, August 2012). When the rising cost of food and gas is accounted for, declining family incomes means Connecticut's poor are losing ground.

Further exasperating Connecticut's economic recovery is the state's growing number of "opportunity youth," young adults between the ages of 16 and 24 who are disconnected from the societal institutions that can help them successfully transition into adulthood, particularly education and employment. In 2011, there were at least 45,000 young adults in Connecticut not attending school, not working, and had no degree beyond high school (Kids Count Data Center, <http://datacenter.kidscount.org>). If left unchecked, this growing number of opportunity youth will undermine Connecticut's ability to make a strong economic recovery. "Disconnected youth are more likely than other youth to engage in criminal activities, become incarcerated, and rely on public systems of support," and the disengagement of these young adults has real financial consequences (Government Accountability Office, "Disconnected Youth: Federal action could address some of the challenges faced by local programs that reconnect youth to education and employment", February 2008). Over a lifetime, the lost earnings, lower economic growth, lower tax revenues, and higher government spending on social programming related to Connecticut's 45,000 opportunity youth has an estimated fiscal cost of at least \$9,701,100,000 and a social cost of at least \$26,848,800,000 (Belfield, Leven & Rosen, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth", January 2012). Connecticut's long-term economic recovery hinges on the ability to put the lives of opportunity youth on track to success through educational opportunity and sustainable careers.

Connecticut has a rich nonprofit sector, made up of almost 13,000 charitable organizations working to support the efforts of government and the private sector to address the need of the state's impoverished. Because of continuing economic decline for the state's most vulnerable citizens, the demand for nonprofit support is on a long-term upward trend. According to results of a survey of Connecticut nonprofits released in October 2012 by the United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, demand for services continued to increase in 2012 as they have every year since 2008 and are anticipated to continue increasing. Ninety-five percent (95.4%) of survey respondents reported that demand for services remained flat or increased in the last fiscal year, and 83.5% indicated an expectation for demand for services to continue increasing. Most of the survey's respondents (66.7%) are meeting those needs with unchanged or reduced staffing levels while 62% are providing services with flat or decreased revenues ("Summary of Results of 2012 Non-profit Pulse Survey", United Way

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of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, October 2012). The cycle of attempting to meet increased demand with constrained budgets threatens the Connecticut nonprofit sector's viability and effectiveness. In times such as these, organizations must deliver more effective solutions with greater efficiency that can be replicated to have the greatest impact possible.

B. AMERICORPS MEMBERS AS HIGHLY EFFECTIVE MEANS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY PROBLEMS

Public Allies' mission is to advance new leadership to strengthen communities, nonprofits and civic participation. Public Allies believes that in order to solve the most challenging issues in Hartford, Bridgeport and New Haven, we must have strong communities that are "leader full" and where all human and organizational assets are leveraged to work collaboratively in innovative ways for the common good. This requires that 1) we must enhance the capacity of nonprofits to deliver more effective programs with fewer resources, and 2) we must mine the untapped leadership potential of our communities' opportunity youth, and place them on a pathway to sustainable employment and education, contributing to the city's economic and social resurgence.

Public Allies Connecticut is requesting 40 full-time AmeriCorps Members, whom we will place in various community organizations, called "Partner Organizations," to deliver service designed to increase organizational capacity in our three focus cities--Bridgeport, New Haven and Hartford. Each Member will provide at least 1700 hours of service during the course of their 10 months with Public Allies, while participating in a rigorous program of training, coaching, and reflection that will give our Members confidence in their ability to effect change, accomplish goals, and act as leaders.

NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING. Nonprofits understand they must do more with less, and are clear about their need for additional capacity. Of the Connecticut nonprofits responding to the Nonprofit Finance Fund's 2012 "State of the Sector" survey 54% indicated that they planned to add or expand programs and services, 59% planned to collaborate to provide services, 58% wish to increase the number of people served, and 44% planned to partner to increase or improve the quality of the services they offer. When seeking support for plans to increase their organizational capacity, the nonprofit sector often looks towards the philanthropic sector for funding. However, capacity-building grants are often focused on providing training and consultants to executive level staff, typically related to fund development, staff training, and board development. Public Allies believes there is a valuable role for AmeriCorps members to play in meeting the capacity needs of nonprofit organizations by delivering year-long service projects designed to enhance an organization's ability to deliver impactful programs and services.

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Cultivating Strategic Partnerships. Public Allies delivers a systematic intervention that begins with developing partnerships with a wide array of community and faith-based organizations that would not otherwise have the ability to manage an AmeriCorps program. As an intermediary, we develop strategic partnerships with nonprofit sector organizations best positioned to leverage service as a solution to one of the six CNCS designated issue areas. Prior to developing a Member position description, Public Allies guides each potential partner through a capacity self-assessment. This assessment is based upon the McKinsey Capacity Assessment Grid developed in 2001 by Venture Philanthropy Partners and now widely recognized as an industry best practice. The Public Allies capacity assessment focuses on measuring capacity need in several areas where AmeriCorps members could provide supportive service--program development, delivery, and evaluation; community engagement and interface; and organizational infrastructure and resources, and are aligned with the CNCS Capacity Building Framework. The assessment, completed by at least one executive level and one managerial level staff person in the organization, roots out capacity needs within areas that are appropriate for our full-time AmeriCorps members to address within a 10-month term. The results of this assessment help frame the position descriptions for the Member placements.

Leveraging Service for Sustained Impact. The service delivered by our Members is intentionally designed to increase the capacity of our partner organizations, accelerating their impact on community needs. In each placement, Members will serve approximately 35 hours per week for 10 months with our Partner Organizations, where their service will be strategically leveraged to build one of three types of organization capacity: increased efficiency in the operations or provision of services; increased effectiveness in the quality or results of services, or increased ability to reach new target populations. In their placements, Members will perform a variety of activities, most often planning and implementing new services, helping an organization bring an existing service to more community members, recruiting more volunteers, and by helping organizations refine their practices such that they can provide enhanced services to communities. Public Allies is careful to work with our host sites to design service projects that complements or enhances what the agency currently delivers and our Members are not displacing staff or volunteer positions that formerly existed within the organization. Examples of the types of service projects Public Allies Connecticut Members will deliver include:

- Developing a step-by-step guide for high school-aged youth living in Domus residential programs that are looking to pursue a post-secondary educational or career experience.
- Developing an outreach plan in collaboration with parent-leaders to increase the people served by Teach our Children programs. This plan will include feedback from potential program

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participants, presentations to community members to recruit participants, revised materials and improved communication tools;

● For Hands on Hartford, further developing the Backpack Program, including refining current distribution mechanisms, expanding to new partners, and maintaining sufficient contributions of food, and recruiting volunteers to implement the program.

MEMBER PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY. Of the 40 full-time AmeriCorps Members Public Allies is requesting, at least half will fit the description of an "opportunity youth", either not in school or not employed, and not possessing a degree beyond a high school diploma. We know, based upon the findings of the report "Opportunity Road: The promise and Challenge of America's Forgotten Youth," that while these young adults are disengaged, they are confident about achieving their goals, want a good career, and want to pursue an education beyond high school. What they lack is the access to jobs or the skills or education to pursue the types of positions that interest them. They also face economic and experiential barriers to go on to school. (Bridgeland, Milano; "Opportunity Road: The promise and challenge of America's forgotten youth"; January 2012)

Public Allies Connecticut will meet the needs of our opportunity youth by engaging them in meaningful service while gaining professional work experience. While engaged in service, the Members will receive up to 170 hours of leadership development training, designed to give them a platform to develop the soft professional skills required to carry out their service and act as a servant leader. In addition to service, the Members participate in regular coaching throughout their terms of service and prepare individual development plans that outline their personal and professional goals and how the steps they will take to achieve those goals. Through this combination of consistent, professional service experience, coaching, reflection, and training, Members will gain the confidence, relationships, and planning required to pursue their post-service educational and career goals.

C. EVIDENCE-BASED/EVIDENCE-INFORMED AND MEASURABLE COMMUNITY IMPACT
NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING. Public Allies has designed its capacity building service delivery program using research-based best practices and evidence informed by years of our internal performance data. As a result of the service projects delivered by our Members, Public Allies will increase in ordered, incremental ways, the capacity of nonprofit organizations in Connecticut, ultimately enhancing the ability of those organizations to meet the increased demand for services among Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven's neediest citizens. Annually, organizations hosting Public Allies Connecticut Members will report an increase in the effectiveness, efficiency or scale of

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their programs. Over the long-term, we will evaluate the effect that multiple capacity-building strategies have had on community conditions and the degree to which the capacity needs of our recurring partners have decreased over time.

Public Allies has selected CNCS standard performance measures for our output and two of our three intermediate outcomes. Our capacity building output will capture the number of organizations that receive capacity building service from Public Allies Members. Our intermediate outcomes will measure the extent to which the capacity need described prior to the term of service has been adequately addressed by our program. Of the organizations requiring more effective or efficient services, or an increase in the scale of their program, how many have had those needs met? Our targets for these measures are based on Public Allies' history of delivering capacity building services. Our goal is by the end of the term, at least 85% of our Partner Organizations will reflect that their capacity increased due to our Members' service.

Research tells us that when applied intentionally and correctly, capacity-building efforts work. In a study on the impact of its Organizational Effectiveness grant program, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation surveyed 169 capacity-building grantees that finished projects between 2007 and 2009. The findings of their survey verify that the investment in an organization's capacity has significant measurable impact on programs and services: program quality and reach improve, organizations become more strategic with programs, and visibility and community support for their programs are increased. Most of the respondents (53%) indicated that the new capacity sustained itself with significant organizational wide impact. (TCC Group, "The David and Lucile Packard Foundation OE Goldmine Research Project Final Report", October 2011)

Public Allies Connecticut's past results also serve as a testament to our ability to deliver effective capacity building. In the 2011-12 program year, 96% of our Partner Organizations indicated our Members met or exceeded their expectations to carry out the capacity building service objectives assigned to them. Further, when asked if their organization's capacity increased because of their AmeriCorps Member's service, 97% of 2011-12 Partner Organizations responded affirmatively. MEMBER PATHWAYS TO ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY. The interventions of our Member development program include a number of the noted best practices for working with opportunity youth. The research conducted by Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement and documented in the whitepaper "Civic Pathways Out of Poverty and Into Opportunity" demonstrates that program designs such as Public Allies', which combines service, training, coaching, and experiential learning, has the components to help young adults develop the skills and relationships that can eliminate the

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barriers that keep them out of school and unemployed.

Community service and civic engagement are a best practice for increasing the odds that young adults will form the connections to role models and social networks. The relationships built during the process of serving help young adults develop a support network (Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement, "Civic Pathways Out of Poverty and Into Opportunity," November 2010). Through Public Allies, young adults will develop relationships with leaders, co-workers and volunteers at their host sites, noted Connecticut leaders who volunteer their time to train our Members, and Public Allies alumni. Service is also an effective way for youth to build the "hard" and "soft" skills required to succeed in higher education, the workforce, and in their personal lives (Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement). Trainings such as asset-based community development, volunteer management, effective meeting facilitation, and developing collaborations are designed to give our Members the skills required to successfully carry out their service projects, while trainings such as time management, public speaking, managing up, giving and receiving feedback, and resume writing help our Members address the issues that can serve as barriers in moving their careers forward.

According to an annual evaluation of Members, our training and support makes a difference. Of the Members that participated in the Public Allies program in 2011, 97% of our graduates indicated they gained greater self-confidence because of the program, 97% felt well prepared for their future education and career goals, and 100% left the program viewing themselves as leaders who can make a difference. Ninety-two percent of Members believe their Public Allies experience contributed to their ability to assume a leadership role in the execution of their service projects. By the end of their terms with Public Allies, our Members understand how to get results in their work, are more dedicated to deeper community impact, and are more results-focused and values-driven.

The skills our Members develop during the program, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, prepare them to move successfully into sustainable jobs or degree programs following their graduation from Public Allies. Upon graduating from Public Allies Connecticut, 38% Members of the class of 2011 without degrees went on to take jobs with their Partner Organizations or another nonprofit following their graduation and 38% participated in a second term of service with Public Allies. Sixty-three percent (63%) of the graduates without degrees were headed back to school, including some who secured jobs. To demonstrate our program's effectiveness, we will capture and report to CNCS the percentage of Public Allies AmeriCorps Members who graduate from the program and go on to take a college level course within one year following their graduation from Public Allies. Our target is that at least 65% of our non-degree graduates will go on to pursue higher education

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following their terms of service.

D. MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Recruitment and Selection. Public Allies Connecticut has nine years experience recruiting young adults ages 18-30 from diverse backgrounds living in the communities we serve who are United States citizens and have a high school diploma or GED. Our recruitment efforts are grass-root and community based. We engage in a year-round recruitment process by conducting informational sessions at local high schools, colleges and universities, human service and youth serving organizations, employment agencies, and word of mouth from staff, advisory board members, alumni, and Partner Organizations. These recruitment efforts are supported by the Public Allies national office recruitment infrastructure that offers national branding, an online application, social media marketing, recruitment materials, and strategy development support. Our goal in these efforts is to attract a highly competitive and diverse pool of candidates that reflects the community in which we serve.

Our comprehensive community outreach and thorough selection process enables us to recruit very diverse groups of Members in each community. The demographics of our classes are designed to be over-representative of people of color and those without a college degree. Public Allies' commitment to "Everyone Leads" is reflected in our commitment to provide service and leadership opportunities to young adults who often would not typically be identified as community leaders. Historically, the demographic makeup of Public Allies Connecticut's class has been over 50% persons of color, 60% been women, and over 28% non-college graduates. The Members range in age from 18-30 with the majority between 23 and 25 years old. The overwhelming majority of our Members live in the communities they serve.

Our selection process typically includes a staff review of all applicants, a one-on-one panel interview, a group observation activity, and finally individual candidate interviews with 3-7 community organizations that are potential fits for their interests and skills. Candidates that make it through each level of this process are finalists. Public Allies selects the best matches between each finalist and our Partner Organizations. Once enrolled, our full-time AmeriCorps Members are provided with a living stipend of \$16,500. All Members receive the full package of AmeriCorps benefits. Our Members also receive intensive leadership development coaching and training, build community with a diverse cohort of peers through retreats, training and team service projects, and upon graduation have access to career opportunities, scholarships, training and even grants to support their continued community service and civic engagement through Public Allies' alumni programs.

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To support the 50% of our cohort that will be opportunity youth, Public Allies Connecticut will collaborate with its extensive network of partners, particularly youth serving agencies such as Our Piece of the Pie, Youth Rights Media, and Solar Youth, Inc. that successfully work with opportunity youth. Not only will we rely on these partnerships to identify potential Members, we will also utilize these partnerships to provide the additional wrap-around support services that may be required for our Members.

E. MEMBER TRAINING

Orientation. Public Allies' Member orientation begins long before enrollment. Prior to enrollment, Members are oriented to the minimum requirements for participation in AmeriCorps, service requirements and the high expectations for participation in the program. Once enrolled, an intensive, multi-day team-building retreat and rigorous week of core training serve to orient Members to Public Allies and to the communities the Members will serve. Core training topics include the history of National Service and Public Allies; orientation to our contracts, policies, performance measures and standards for excellence; as well as targeted skill-building workshops that prepare Members to excel in their service at their host sites. During the core training week, host site supervisors also attend an orientation with the Members to review goals and expectations for the program year. This is all prior to the orientation that each Member will receive from their individual service site.

Acknowledgement of prohibited activities is central to the orientation process. Each Member participates in a thorough orientation to prohibited activities during initial Member intake processes and during the formal orientation when the Member contract is also reviewed. To underscore further the importance of abiding by AmeriCorps regulations, program staff discuss the types of situations Members should avoid and when Members should consult with their Public Allies Program Manager in the instance the activities they are to engage in appear questionable. Our success in avoiding prohibited activities requires that our partners be as well versed in prohibited activities as our Members. Partner Organizations are presented the prohibited activities in the Public Allies policies and procedures manual, which is thoroughly reviewed during the required Partner Organization orientation. A review of Member position descriptions prior to service ensures in advance that Member service objectives do not include prohibited activities, and regular review of member service activities by Public Allies Program Managers ensures compliance with the regulations during the term.

Training. Our training program incorporates our core leadership values in support of our mission. These include Diversity/Inclusion, Focus on Assets, Collaboration, Integrity, and Continuous Learning. There are two key foci for Public Allies Member development: Leadership Training and

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Continuous Learning. As documented by Public Allies CEO, Paul Schmitz, in his recently-released book, "Everyone Leads," the Public Allies Leadership Training program focuses on cultivating a leadership style grounded in three key beliefs: "Leadership is an action that many can take, not a position that only a few can hold. Leadership is about taking personal and social responsibility to work with others for common goals. Leadership is about the practice of values that engage diverse community members and groups working together effectively." Long-practiced by Public Allies, this notion of a new definition of the quality of leadership is gaining momentum as even universities and colleges refine their academic leadership programs to focus on a definition of leadership that is "less a matter of position and income and more one of action and public purpose. It emphasizes collaboration and horizontal arrangements in which everyone is a leader, rather than part of a hierarchy. It is also more bottom-up than top-down, and it is inclusive in welcoming diversity in all its facets." (From *Command to Community: a new approach to leadership education in colleges and universities*, Nicholas Longo and Cynthia Gibson, 2011)

Members will be brought together weekly as a cohort throughout the term for their Member development activities. Recognized community leaders, skilled practitioners, and trainers donate their time to provide weekly training in the skills laid out in our curriculum. To strengthen communities, Members learn community outreach skills, collaboration, and conflict resolution. To strengthen nonprofits, Members learn skills such as time management, collaboration, and evaluation. To enhance civic participation, Members learn volunteer engagement skills and participate in dialogues and critical reflections to connect their service to larger social issues.

The training offered by Public Allies Connecticut is effective. Allies report that after their service experience, they are more values driven and results oriented, clearer on their long-term career goals, inspired and compelled to be more engaged in the community, reflective and aware of their leadership styles, and informed and experienced to have a greater community impact.

F. MEMBER SUPERVISION

Supervision. Each Public Allies AmeriCorps Member is assigned to individual host sites where they carryout service activities to enhance organizational capacity to deliver direct service programs. As described above, we select our Partner Organizations through a competitive process in which they are vetted by Public Allies staff to determine that the organization is eligible to host an AmeriCorps Member and has the demonstrated need to build organizational capacity. In order to host our Members, Partner Organizations must identify an experienced direct supervisor, whose resume has been reviewed by Public Allies and who can commit to 1) providing daily supervision and support to

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the Member, ensuring that the Member has the proper resources available to them and is on target to achieve service goals, and 2) maintain a close partnership with a Public Allies Program Manager to ensure Member's experience is relevant and meaningful. A Public Allies Program Manager regularly coordinates with the host site supervisor to troubleshoot the partnership, reflect on the partnership's success, and when necessary, create plans to ensure Members can successfully complete their term. Program Managers are responsible for providing regular coaching to Allies on personal and career goals, coordinating training workshops, and monitoring Member timesheets and service reports to ensure that the activities being carried out are allowable and in line with the approved position description. Expectations of our partners are clearly defined in the host agency contract and policies and procedures manual which each organization agrees to uphold. Partner Organization supervisors are required to attend trainings each year on giving and receiving feedback and cross-generational supervising that are facilitated by faculty from local college/universities and current and retired nonprofit executives. These trainings are well-received by supervisors and designed to help them facilitate a positive and successful experience for our Members.

G. MEMBER EXPERIENCE

Public Allies is grounded in the conviction that "Everyone Leads." Everyone has talents and a voice to offer to improve their community. It is this premise that undergirds how we prepare our Members to achieve impact in their service terms and beyond. The intentional cultivation of our Members' leadership skills allows them to have even greater impact on their Partner Organizations than that of other entry-level volunteers or employees. Recent Partner Organization satisfaction surveys indicate that one of the greatest benefits of the partnership was Public Allies' ability to provide promising young talent to be cultivated for leadership within their organization and provide them in a cost-effective way to create or enhance important projects. Further, 75% of host sites indicated our Members demonstrated greater or substantial growth in comparison to other entry-level employees at their organizations. Despite their relative inexperience in the workforce and their lack of experience in the nonprofit sector, our Members, including those without degrees, are overwhelmingly successful in achieving the goals laid out for their service. Ninety-six percent (96%) of our Members met or exceeded their supervisor's expectations.

Along with the formal training program which brings our Members together as a cohort weekly, Members are coached through a structured Continuous Learning process that extends through their entire term of service. The Public Allies Continuous Learning process is often seen as a key benefit to our Partner Organizations. Organizations are only as good as their people, and our process provides

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comprehensive support to young adults entering fields of public service that rarely provide extensive orientation or support. Each Member is assigned a point person (Program Manager) from Public Allies whose role is to support the Members' learning and performance in the program and at the Partner Organization. This support typically takes the form of guided coaching and opportunities to reflect on their personal and professional goals through the lens of their practice of values-based leadership. In addition to guided coaching, twice per term Public Allies facilitates a 360-degree feedback process, where key stakeholders provide feedback to Members and assess Member performance and leadership in the context of organizational effectiveness. Finally, at the end of the program year, Members participate in presentations of learning, where they share with an audience of community stakeholders, their reflections on the impact of their service and leadership on their Partner Organizations and the greater community.

Public Allies approaches civic education experientially and uses dialogues and critical reflection processes to help Allies connect their service to larger social issues and to ideas such as democracy and volunteerism. The Training & Learning Program is set up specifically to use the platform of actual community work to facilitate the learning of leadership skills and an ethic of service. This design entails balancing self-knowledge, critical reflection and skills training in a way that is unique to most leadership and service programs. Public Allies facilitates exercises to help the Members change their way of thinking from that of a passive "student" to participant and facilitator who is in charge of her or his own experience.

The development of our Members' service ethic is enhanced by their identities as AmeriCorps Members. Fully oriented to the AmeriCorps charge to "get things done," our Members identify themselves as a part of a local and national network of volunteers dedicated to using service as a solution. Members take the AmeriCorps oath during their opening orientation and identify themselves as Members of the Public Allies AmeriCorps program. Public Allies fosters this identity by encouraging Allies to collaborate with their fellow AmeriCorps Members in the implementation of service day activities and team service projects.

Over the course of their terms, Members work together in small groups to plan a project that also leads to a measurable community impact in our areas of focus. We form teams of seven to ten Members at the beginning of the program year to work with a nonprofit organization on a time-limited (typically 7 months) project that Members plan, implement, and evaluate before the end of the program. The organizations commit a staff liaison and the necessary resources and present these projects to the Member teams. The projects, practicum in project planning and applying the leadership

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skills discussed in training, are typically implemented in the spring prior to the end of the term.

H. VOLUNTEER GENERATION

Public Allies' leadership values have shaped our philosophy of volunteer recruitment. While seeking and supporting volunteerism to support our partners, we especially seek to increase volunteerism among the defined client groups, whether demographic or geographic. Each Public Allies Member is responsible for engaging, wherever appropriate, volunteers to serve alongside our Members at our Partner Organizations. We provide a volunteer recruitment and management workshop at the beginning of the year along with an Asset-Based Community Development workshop focused on volunteer generation. The volunteer engagement activities executed by our Members vary depending on what is most appropriate for the Member's host-site. Some Members are responsible for volunteer recruitment, orientation and retention, while others engage volunteers on an ad-hoc basis to support one-time or on-going activities. The volunteers recruited by our Members perform a variety of tasks, per the organization's demand. We thoroughly review prohibited activities with our Members and their host site supervisors. In discussing prohibited activities, we convey that "indirect" prohibited activities are not allowed and that the restrictions for prohibited activities also apply to the volunteers recruited and managed by our Members. Typical examples of volunteer activities include managing soup kitchens and holiday food drives, working with individual children in homework club programs, serving as event facilitators, teaching teen health classes, assisting at one-day events, and serving seniors. Over the past two years, Public Allies Connecticut AmeriCorps members have recruited 9,877 volunteers who provided 28,523 hours of service to the Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven communities.

I. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO AMERICORPS IDENTIFICATION

As a national organization that leverages national service, Public Allies is very committed to ensuring that all AmeriCorps activity is branded appropriately and effectively. We see ourselves as partners in raising the visibility of AmeriCorps and the impact of national service on communities. As such, our commitment to effective co-branding is codified in our national branding guidelines and is shared and enforced throughout our network. Our websites, Member recruitment portals, and printed materials all display the AmeriCorps logo, and our Members, after being thoroughly oriented to their roles as AmeriCorps Members, are issued AmeriCorps co-branded gear. We further encourage all projects and service sites to proudly display the AmeriCorps logo.

Organizational Capability

A. ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND AND STAFFING

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Public Allies was founded in 1992 to serve as a pipeline for a new generation of diverse young leaders to begin careers working for community and social change. After its founding, Public Allies replicated its first expansion site in Chicago in 1993, where our program served as one of the first demonstration models when CNCS was founded. Public Allies Connecticut was launched in 2003 in partnership with RYASAP. Public Allies is regarded as having a comprehensive program model that blends community service, nonprofit capacity building, civic engagement and leadership development with best practice evaluation processes. Public Allies now exists in 21 communities across the United States with over 4,500 AmeriCorps members having served to date. Our results over the last fifteen years, as shared throughout this proposal demonstrate our ability to achieve our mission.

In the execution of the AmeriCorps grant, the primary role of Public Allies National Office is to support the design, delivery and monitoring of our AmeriCorps program. The National Office currently manages AmeriCorps competitive grants with two state commissions and has managed a growing national direct grant since 1993. During the 2009-10 program year, Public Allies successfully managed up to 18 grants from CNCS, half of which were American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grants. The lead staff administering the grant, the Director of AmeriCorps Grants and the VP of Finance and Administration, collectively have over fourteen years of experience managing AmeriCorps grants. The value of this combined experience was demonstrated in the organization's successful management of its grants, including the ARRA grants, which required a heightened degree of monitoring and reporting.

Nationally, Public Allies is governed by a Board of Directors that includes a diverse group of leaders who bring a wealth of experience and expertise to Public Allies, including several with experience in National Service such as former CNCS CEO, David Eisner, and Youthbuild USA President, Dorothy Stoneman. The Board of Directors sets the governance policy for the organization and strategic direction, which are carried out by our President and CEO, Paul Schmitz. Internal operations are managed by Cris Ros-Dukler, our Chief Operating Officer, who leads an Executive Team of four Vice Presidents. Cris is a renowned organizational reformer who led state regulatory departments in Texas and Wisconsin, and served as COO of a regional nonprofit overseeing \$11 million budget and 400 employees working to improve foster care services in two states.

The Program Team that works collaboratively to provide support to our local programs carries out management of the Public Allies AmeriCorps program. The Program Team is lead by the Vice-President of Programs, and consists of a Director of AmeriCorps Grants who leads the team in AmeriCorps grant management and regulatory implementation, National Program Consultants who

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are responsible for monitoring site compliance and quality and providing technical assistance in program delivery, a Director of Training and Learning who designs staff learning interventions and manages the Public Allies central guidance repository, a Data Manager who manages the maintenance of our web-based Member management system, and a Director of Recruitment and a Director of Alumni Engagement, who are responsible for supporting local site efforts to recruit a diverse cohort and engage that cohort beyond their service with Public Allies. In addition, a Director of Quality Assurance and Evaluation works closely with the Chief Operating Officer and local sites to develop a quality assurance system and enhance evaluation designs in order to ensure our success in achieving goals and objectives. The Director of Quality Assurance and Evaluation is the lead staff person that works with the external evaluator to produce our required AmeriCorps evaluation. Public Allies operates an affiliate structure, in which we contract with a local university or nonprofit to manage the operations of our local Public Allies site. . The Operating Partner of Public Allies Connecticut is RYASAP, an urban/suburban collaborative for solving community problems in greater Bridgeport and throughout Connecticut. RYASAP has programs in juvenile justice advocacy and diversion; health promotion; training and replication; human services and education systems and policy reform; and youth and young adult leadership development--including Public Allies. Public Allies Connecticut is lead by a full-time Site Director, Tyler Driscoll who has worked for Public Allies for the past five years. As Site Director, Tyler is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of Public Allies Connecticut, including building the relevant external relations required to support the program. Tyler supervises three full-time Program Managers who each manage a caseload of Members and the corresponding relationships with Partner Organizations. Each of the Program Managers specializes in an additional area of program delivery, including Member recruitment, partner recruitment, training, and evaluation. Public Allies considers training for staff just as essential to the outcome of our program as the training provided to our Members. Each new Public Allies staff member goes through a new site orientation delivered to staff at our annual National Leadership Institute. The Site Director has gone through in-person training by the Public Allies National Office that includes understanding the Public Allies movement, orientation to CNCS and AmeriCorps, and an introduction to available resources and networks, and financial management. Staff also meet regionally and nationally with other Public Allies staff across the national network. Staff can take advantage of the virtual trainings and webinars held throughout the year and Public Allies' web-based intelligence repository that plays hosts to its online minimum standards and program tools.

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B. SUSTAINABILITY

Decreased Reliance on Federal Support. Each year that Public Allies has been a grantee, we've been able to successfully exceed the required match rate for AmeriCorps programs; matching our federal grant almost 100% with support from our Partner Organizations and cash donations raised by the organization running our program. Between 40% and 50% of our program's costs are garnered from Partner Organizations who pay 75% or more of the Members living allowance and taxes. In addition, Public Allies Connecticut has a strong history of fundraising through regular donors such as the Hartford, New Haven, and Fairfield County Community Foundations, Tow Foundation, the Graustein Memorial Fund, and Travelers Insurance Foundation. Public Allies continues to exist as a public-private partnership that relies on the public investment to stimulate the other funds necessary to operate our program.

Sustainability of Impact. Our goal as an intermediary focused on capacity building is to identify and serve on projects that our partners can sustain after our Members' terms end. The product of our Members' service terms ensures the capacity increase delivered can be sustained, whether it is in the form of program marketing materials that have been translated into a second language to broaden the clients served by the organization; or a volunteer orientation manual, a comprehensive community assessment, or the new curriculum for a youth development program. Further, we work to ensure that our Partners continue to build on the momentum of our Members' projects. Most of our Partner Organizations return to host additional Allies -- often with a goal that the new Member will enhance the previous year's accomplishments.

To further extend the impact of our program's sustainability, we develop collaborations at all levels of the program's implementation. Collaboration is a core value of Public Allies and everything we do is based upon leveraging and supporting the resources of other organization. At the community level, Public Allies also collaborates extensively. Our Members are encouraged to develop collaborations with peers in their cohort as well as other organization as a means of enhancing their host sites' ability to provide critical services. Public Allies also collaborates with organizations for member recruitment, training and team service projects. By developing these community linkages, our Members grow in their awareness of the wide variety of resources in their communities they serve and learn how to utilize them to enhance and expand services, and our Partners develop partnerships that last long beyond our Members' terms.

Sustained Community Support. To help plan and implement the program, in keeping with our belief in the power of grassroots leadership Public Allies Connecticut engages local leaders to provide

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guidance and support to ensure that Public Allies Connecticut is achieving its intended impact. Volunteers are engaged to help recruit our Members and Partner Organizations, to deliver training to our Members, and informally advise staff.

Lastly, to ensure we are taking constantly improving our program, we annually survey our AmeriCorps Members and Partner Organizations to determine their level of satisfaction with the program and to solicit feedback on improvements that can be made.

C. COMPLIANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Program Monitoring. Public Allies has a unified vision, mission, and program standards that all sites must follow. The Public Allies national program team annually reviews a set of compliance standards that lay out what all Public Allies programs, including Public Allies Connecticut, must implement and achieve. These program standards cover all AmeriCorps regulations and Public Allies program requirements while leaving room for sites to respond as required to local needs and interests. RYASAP has signed an agreement with Public Allies National Office agreeing to comply with the minimum standards in the implementation of the program and participate in all evaluation activities, which are monitored by the National Office Program Team. The health of Public Allies Connecticut relative to grant compliance, quality programming, and partnerships is measured annually by Public Allies National Office through the national site scorecard. Our scorecard has been identified by CNCS as a best practice and presented at the national CNCS grantee meeting on program monitoring and evaluation.

In addition to monitoring program outcomes, Public Allies also monitors closely the service of our Members. The staff of Public Allies Connecticut works with our Partner Organizations to establish clear position descriptions for each Member with service objectives, and by providing comprehensive orientations to our Members and Partners. Our Internet-based evaluation tool enables staff locally and nationally to continuously monitor the service activities of our members individually, by site, and nationally. A national staff person will make one official site visit each year, during which time file reviews, interviews with Members and Partner Organization supervisors, attendance at trainings and team service project meetings and other monitoring activities take place. The National Office will support Public Allies Connecticut in submitting its required quarterly reports to the state commission. Our high-tech and direct monitoring activities enable us to support the continuous learning and improvement of our programs.

Fiscal Monitoring. The national Vice President of Finance and Administration fiscally administers all Public Allies grants. Public Allies undergoes an annual A133 audit, conducted by and independent

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auditor, and our affiliates undergo A133 audits as required.

In the instance that we identify systemic risks and practices of noncompliance, Public Allies National Office works with our local site to 1) understand the root cause of the compliance concern, 2) directs the site to employ a systems approach to addressing corrective actions, and 3) if necessary, implements a series of rewards and consequences, up to and including suspension of the site, to ensure the highest fidelity to the requirements of the grant.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness

A. COST EFFECTIVENESS

Public Allies Connecticut's requested cost per Member Service Year is \$13,000 under the fixed price grant model. Public Allies seeks the maximum AmeriCorps grant per MSY for three reasons. First, our program model is rigorous. The extensive leadership development and nonprofit capacity building activities we undertake, especially with smaller community organizations, make our program model more distinctive than others. Second, we serve a very diverse corps of young adults with about half college graduates and half with a high school diploma or GED and provide more extensive support to our members as a result. Coaching is a best practice when working with this population. To meet this need, we employ a maximum of a 15:1 Member to Program Manager ratio. This ensures that each of our Members receives the direct attention and support required to get the most of the program and successfully complete.

Third, we pay a higher stipend than most programs with an average about \$16,500 for 1,700 hours. We believe that such a stipend is important to make our program available to diverse young adults and to reward the individual placement work they are doing at organizations. It should be noted that our net cost per member (total cost per member minus stipends and benefits) is lower than many comparable organizations that do not provide the extensive leadership development and nonprofit capacity building that we do. This is also comparably lower than many organizations would typically pay entry-level workers or consultants to take on the capacity building activities our Members are performing.

The total cost for the Public Allies Connecticut program is conservatively estimated at \$1,400,000, of which 37% comes from CNCS. Another 41% of the program's cost are covered by the cost share arrangement between Public Allies and our Member host sites, which pay between \$14,300 and \$15,800 to host a Member. The remaining costs are covered by private donations raised by Public Allies Connecticut and RYASAP. In addition to cash resources, Public Allies leverages the donation of time and resources from trainers, facilitators and other community businesses that donate in-kind

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space, food, and other resources to support our operations.

B. BUDGET ADEQUACY

The real cost to deliver the Public Allies program is almost three times as much as the requested grant of \$520,000. As outlined above, Public Allies strategically leverages the investment of our Partner Organizations to meet almost half of our budgeted costs. This cost-share model allows Public Allies to concentrate our AmeriCorps grant funds to cover non-living allowance Member expenses such as Member health care, criminal history checks, training costs and staff expenses. In addition, at least \$300,000 in matching funds is raised by Public Allies Connecticut to underwrite program expenses. Public Allies National Office also helps identify sources of support, raising funds from national donors to underwrite our costs.

Evaluation Summary or Plan

N/A

Amendment Justification

N/A

Clarification Summary

N/A

Continuation Changes

N/A